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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how kindergarten children and their teachers "perform" in kindergartens and how they "account" for their actions. Reported are conclusions from a series of three studies carried out in 15 Israeli kindergartens. Data for the first two studies were collected in non-participant observations, audio-recordings, and semi-structured interviews with teachers. Analyses showed how, within the broader confines of teachers' planned schedules, children exercised discretion over the sounds they made, their movements, and uses of time and space. The ways in which children collectively exercise discretion defined the age-group as a social category and as a group with self-propelled interests different from those of the socializing adults. The third study included interviews with kindergarten teachers and children to elicit accounts of their experiences. Teachers' accounts reflected their educational intentions. Children's accounts showed them to be (1) cognizant of the teachers' schedules; (2) interested in and able to talk about the activities that they themselves initiated; and (3) aware of being part of a group that has a place in the kindergarten environment. It is suggested that the discrepancies between the accounts of chldren and adults are best explained as a latent consequence of how performances are structured in kindergartens. (Author/RH)

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Performances and Accounts:

Reflections on the kindergarten experience

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Revised version of a paper presented at the
Conference on Thinking, Harvard Graduate School of Education
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ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss how kindergarten children and their teachers "perform" in kindergartens and how they "account" for their actions. It reports conclusions from a series of three studies carried out in 15 Israeli kindergartens. Data for the first two studies were collected in non-participant observations, audio-recordings and semi-structured interviews with teachers. Analyses showed how, within the broader confines of teachers' planned schedules, children exercised discretion over the sounds they made, their movements, and uses of time and space. The ways in which children collectively used opportunities to exercise discretion defined the age-group as a social category, and as a group with self-propelled interests that are differentiated from those of the socializing adults. The third study included interviews with kindergarten teachers and children to elicit accounts of their experiences. Teachers' accounts reflected their educational intentions. Children's accounts showed them to be (a) cognizant of the teachers' schedules; (b) interested in the activities that they themselves initiated and able to talk about them; and (c) aware of being part of a group that has a place in the kindergarten environment. It is suggested that the discrepancies between the accounts of children and adults are best explained as a latent consequence of how performances are structured in kindergartens.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will discuss how kindergarten children and their teachers "perform" kindergartens, and how they "account" for their actions. The theoretical basis of our work is Giddens's (1976) view that children take an active part in socialization and "reorder" the lives of those who care for them. This is so because, as research shows, children choose, transform, and act on information provided by the environment as do adults (Chandler, 1977; Denzin, 1972; 1977; Green & Wallat, 1979; Halliday, 1973; Henry, 1957; McKay, 1973; Mehan, 1979; Moore, 1981; Rheingold, 1969).

In both experimental and naturalistic researches, children's accounts have been found to be connected with the selection and organization of relevant environmental cues. The developmental unfolding of competence in social cognitions has been studied in the conversations of children at different ages (Damon, 1981; Nelson, 1981). Other studies focus on the referential sources of children's accourts and on the richness of their content. In a series of studies of children's memory for places, for example, it was found that questions about familiar environments elicited sequential and causal accounts (Axia, Baroni and Mainardi-Peron, 1984).(1) Bluebond-Langer (1978), who listened to the conversations of

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hospitalized, terminally ill children, found that the children were far better informed about their illnesses than parents and medical staff credited.

Included in the state school system by the Compulsory Education Law of 1953 (2), the kindergarten in Israel is an environment designed to provide children with socially organized information. Kindergartens are usually equipped according to government standards and are housed in premises where as many as 35 to 40 children can be cared for and taught. The organization and curriculum of all the kindergartens are determined by regulations of the Ministry of Education issued from Jerusalem, while budgets and supplies are allocated locally.

Teachers are licenced by the Ministry of Education after completing prescribed professional training in teachers' colleges which are budgeted and staffed by the central government. The teacher is responsible for the proper functioning of the kindergarten. In addition to her teaching role, she is administrator, employer of her aide, and teacher-trainer with authority over student teachers. She is accountable on a day-to-day basis to the children's parents, and to the various representatives of the ministry (Cohen, 1978).

Pedagogical advice is offered to teachers in the form of

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"guide books" written by kindergarten supervisors (e.g., Ministry of Education, 1965; 1966), and in professional journals. At the beginning of each school year, and during vacations, supervisors organize study days for kindergarten teachers to discuss current problems.

How kindergarten teachers think and act cannot, however, be deduced from official rules. In what follows, I will first describe observations of how people act in the kindergartens, relating these to the teachers' working theories and statements of goals. I will note some of the ways in which children are seen to exercise discretion over their actions in the kindergarten. These will provide background for the interpretation of the parallel accounts elicited from teachers and children.

THE STUDIES

In what follows, I will summarize three studies of pre-school kindergarten children in Israel. In the first two studies, observations were carried out in order to trace elements of an autonomous culture in the kindergarten. In the third, accounts of what happens in the kindergarten were elicited from both teachers and children for comparison with observed performances. It was our assumption that an analysis of the match between performances and actors' accounts would advance

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understanding of the consequences of instruction.

The questions that we posed to test our assumptions included the following:

(1) Is there a routine that is characteristic of the kindergartens?

(2) Do the sounds of the kindergarten map the day's activities? How are sounds shaped by adults and children?

(3) How are the children's body and hand movements ("locomotion" and "manipulation") correlated with different conditions of teacher control?

(4) To what extent do the accounts of teachers and children match?

The studies that provide the data for this report were carried out over three years. The total sample consisted of 15 non-religious, state-sponsored neighborhood kindergartens where Hebrew is the language of instruction, in and near a city in the north of Israel. The kindergartens were chosen in a quota sample of neighborhoods representing different classes and ethnic strata according to their local tax assessments.

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From the first study which included observations and recordings in 30 kindergartens (cf. Kalekin-Fishman, forthcoming b), we will refer to data from nine kindergartens in which observations (N=2340) were carried out for three to five complete days.(3)

Combining methods of time sampling and field unit analysis (Wright, 1960), the observer sat in a corner near the entrance to each kindergarten and observed the four quarters of the room in clockwise direction during five-minute intervals. Thus the proceedings in the entire kindergarten were surveyed every twenty minutes.

Figure 1 about here

Observations were recorded on a structured schedule on which, as shown in Figure 1, the time was noted at 5 minute intervals, together with the kinds of activity in which the children took part, the ways in which both the teacher and the pupils used the kindergarten space, the levels of movement coordination, and the labels assigned to the events that were taking place. Kindergarten sounds were recorded by a cassette-recorder which was placed near the room entrance (Quarter I of every kindergarten) and was set at 2 1/2 on the loudness scale throughout the kindergarten session.

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When the observations were completed, teachers were interviewed. Using a semi-structured schedule, I asked questions about short and long-term goals in the kindergarten, the structuring of the daily routines, and the normative role-relations. (4)

To collect data for the second study, in which the analysis focused on children's movements (Kalekin-Fishman, 1983; Kalekin-Fishman and Cantor, n.d.), observations of entire morning sessions were conducted once a week in each of two kindergartens selected from the first group, during the months of October to April, the major part of the school year (N=2880).

Figure 2 about here

As shown in Figure 2, the observation schedule that served us included fewer details of global kindergarten events. The emphasis was on children's body movements ("locomotion") and on the kinds of hand movements ("manipulation") children used during the various parts of the session. To this end, we adopted notation from the schemes evolved by Birdwhistell (1970). The hand movements attended to were those related to the manipulation of objects during a given activity. Informal conversations were conducted with the kindergarten teachers to check if our placing of actions in the routines was

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acceptable.

The third study included preliminary observations of about a week in each of 6 kindergartens to confirm that typical practices prevailed. After that we interviewed the teachers and a sample of children in each kindergarten, to elicit their accounts. Teachers were asked to describe a typical kindergarten day, to suggest alternative fillers for time-slots, and to specify the schedule of the day before. Seven to nine children, who were selected by each of the teachers as a representative cross-section of her class, were subsequently interviewed one by one in a corner of the kindergarten. They were asked to relate what usually happens in the kindergarten; their accounts were probed for details. The analysis centered on the relationships between the performance of the kindergarten session and (1) the pedagogical plan and (2) the retrospective accounts of the participants.

FINDINGS

In this section of the paper I will summarize the results of the interviews conducted in the first study and findings from observations in studies 1 and 2. These will subsequently be related to the results of the third study in which accounts were elicited.

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Interviews

In the interviews on their professional orientation, kindergarten teachers showed themselves to be well aware of the overall design of the kindergarten and of its educational aims. The principal goals they noted were to prepare children for school, to inculcate appropriate habits, to advance cognitive development, and to lay the basis for good citizenship and healthy functioning in adult society. The daily kindergarten session is consciously viewed as a translation of the teachers' professional mandate into a schedule. Teachers described the succession of activities that make up the kindergarten day. They stressed the importance of allocating time to activities that promote children's cognitive and social development.

The consensus was that after a year in a compulsory preschool kindergarten, children should have a positive approach to learning and should have a store of information on everyday living as well as basic concepts of thematics and literacy. Good manners and good habits of personal hygiene should have been acquired. Above all, children should be capable of showing consideration for others and a desire to fit in with "the group."

Some teachers gave more and some less detailed descriptions of desirable goals but all were unanimous in emphasizing the

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importance of cognitive achievements, and cited Piaget as the authority for their objectives. In their interpretation, the teacher must spur the children on to maximum attainments.

Observations

In our observations we found that under the teachers' direction, the children meet and disperse in different configurations throughout the kindergarten day. These were governed by routine time slots for activities with rules for introducing alternatives, a range of appropriate and appropriately coordinated sounds, and assigned spaces (Kalekin-Fishman, 1981; forthcoming a).

Generally, the kindergarten is opened at 7:45 in the morning by the teacher's aide, and the teacher arrives at about 8:00 a.m. Children are expected to come on time, and the collective circle, or meeting, begins between 8:00 and 8:30. This is the first and the longest of three daily assemblies. The second is the mid-morning circle, and the last and shortest takes place just before the kindergarten closes at 1:00 p.m. The collective circles all take place in the same area of the kindergarten, and each is based on a determinate theme. Thus, "telling something that happened to you outside the kindergarten" or "conversation" is always part of the first circle, as are telling time and the weather, taking attendance, and so on. Story-telling was invariably left for

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the second or third assembly. But songs were a part of every collective circle.

Work, or crafts, following the first circle, are also controlled in time and space. Materials are distributed on tables in advance. Individuals place themselves, or groups are placed, at tables according to a schedule of rotation; each child is programmed to have the experience of drawing and coloring, cutting and pasting, shaping clay or plasticine, painting with water colors, constructing with blocks, or playing doctor or "Daddy and Mummy", at least once a week or once every ten days.

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"Clean-up" precedes the mid-morning snack and the second assembly, which has a very flexible program. After this there are activities that are called games, usually in the yard, under the aide's supervision; simultaneously, a small group receives instruction from the teacher at a special table inside the kindergarten. These groups, too, rotate on a fixed schedule. The last assembly often includes a reminder of what the day's topics were, then a story, a song and a language game, before the day is officially ended and the children are sent home.

There are situations in which the teacher exercises full control over events. She announces the succeeding activities by name, obliges all the children to participate at the same time in a designated place. She also usually mentions what item of learning is relevant. The aide reminds children of the activity in progress, using the same terms as does the teacher, and repeats the teacher's instructions verbatim with added urgency.

In some activities, the teacher also controls the children's movements. Most obvious are the admonitions to fold arms and sit still - the required position for collective activities. Some control depends on the teachers' perception of the curriculum. There are teachers who devote time in one of the assemblies to formal exercises. In a typical lesson, small groups of children take turns in carrying out coordinated

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exercises while the rest of the class has to "sit still" and observe. In these lessons, the teachers beat rhythm to guide the children. Once or twice a week a visiting rhythmics teacher supplies music with instructions for interpreting it correctly in movement. After prompting, children are invited to react to the music with movements of their own.

Full control is exercised indirectly by the institution of complexes of habits. Mid-morning snack, for example, is conducted as a daily ritual with preliminary hand-washing and a stricture of eating in silence. Songs are routinely performed, not only with uniform rhythm and lyrics, but also with repetitive coordinated movements (Kalekin-Fishman, 1981).

There are many elements in the kindergarten which control the children's movements partially: the design of the building, the types of furnishings, and the allocations of equipment and materials. The yard is designed for relative freedom. It is large enough to allow all the children to engage in intense locomotion. The fixed equipment is not an obligatory locus for play; the toys can be moved or ignored as the child desires; and here the teacher only rarely attempts to carry out a planned activity.

To sum up, we may say that the teachers' instructions and definitions of activities on the one hand, and the

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distribution of equipment and the allotments of time and space, on the other, mark the extent and the limits of control in the kindergarten. In our analyses, therefore, the context was defined as "fully controlled" when the activity is structured according to the teacher's cues; "partially controlled" when everybody takes it for granted that a given activity is dictated by ecological arrangements; and "free" when the kindergarten teacher does not intervene, and the location is not constraining.

Under all conditions of control, children showed their purposefulness in the sounds they made; the ways in which they moved their bodies and hands; their uses of space and time; as well as in the non-kindergarten occupations they cultivated in the kindergarten, and the distance they took up from their roles as kindergarten children. In the following, we will discuss how the children exercised discretion over each of these elements of the kindergarten scene.

(1) Discretion over sound.

In the first study (part of which is reported in Kalekin-Fishman, 1980), the sounds made by teachers, children, and objects were analyzed separately. Audio-recordings were scored over 15-second intervals with scores of 1 or 2 for register: low to high; range: narrow to wide; tempo: slow to fast; dynamics: soft to loud; attack: legato or staccato; and quality: discernible individual lines of sound to choral

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sound. The score for each group in the given interval of time was the sum of the sub-scores multiplied by a score for quantity: filling or not filling the 15-second interval. The higher score indicated more salient sound; and silence was scored as zero.

Teachers' voices were found to be most salient when there were collective activities. They overrode other sounds when reacting to excessive noise, thus defining the range of sound permissible for whatever activity was in progress.

In the analysis of the qualities of the sounds emitted by children, we discovered that the level of salience and the overall quality of children's voices did not vary significantly between different activities nor between different kindergartens (Kruskall-Wallis non-parametric test, $H = 6.9$, n.s.). The modal scores for children's sounds varied from 64 to 88 by contrast with a range of 24 to 56 for the teachers' voices and 0 to 64 for object sounds.

Despite the teacher's control, the children as a group were consistently able to impose their own sounds. The two activities in which silence was demanded of children - snack time and story-time - exemplify this. In most of the kindergartens, snack time was begun with the chant: "One does not converse at meals." But once the sandwich was eaten, whispering to neighbors began and the children's

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characteristic group sound soon revived. Similarly, in the middle of a story the teachers usually checked the children's understanding with questions, and this marked the return to the prevalent level of "white noise."

Table 1 about here

(2) Discretion over movements.

Based on data from the second study (Kalekin-Fishman and Cantor, n.d.), Table 1 shows that the variation in the children's movements was correlated with the levels of control exercised in the different activities. Children held their hands still for 53% of the observations in fully controlled contexts, by contrast with 20% in those partially controlled and 14% in "free" contexts. Similarly, there was a more intense use of locomotion i.e., walking, jumping, galloping, skipping and running, in the free activities. The fact that the proportion of the observations in which such movements occurred was at most 31% does not accord with the educators' expectation that children will always strive for the maximum of movement (Fayence-Glick, 1960). The exit into the yard after the mid-morning snack was indeed an explosion of running and shouting. But once outside the children's vivaciousness subsided and only a few kept up energetic motor activities.

(3) Discretion over space.

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As noted above, standard kindergarten equipment defines regions such as the area in which the assembly takes place, corners for role-play, tables for crafts, a library corner, and drawers for storing finished work.

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There are also areas in which the kindergarten teachers prepare and store materials, a small kitchen, a toilet, and so on. Children took their allotted places during the fully-controlled and partially-controlled activities. However, they shaped their own space by exercising discretion over orientations, distances, and localizations (Von Cranach, 1972), taking advantage of loopholes in the spacing rules to produce enclaves of sociability. Being together was achieved throughout the sessions.

In the circles, children managed mutual orientations. Pairs of children whispered and set themselves apart from the group during assembly; friends who were separated in the circle signaled to each other after glancing to see whether the teacher was looking. During crafts, children exercised some discretion over where they sat and could often manage distances as they wished even when they were assigned to separate tables. One child at the drawing table, for example, and one at the cutting and pasting table often carried on an animated conversation while attending peripherally to whatever they were making. Often children interrupted their own "work" to approach a friend and offer suggestions.

Children washing their hands before the 10 o'clock snack lingered at the towel stands to exchange cards, pictures, and sweets. In one kindergarten, three little boys were embarrassed and pulled up their pants quickly when I came

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upon them together in the toilet. The yard provides opportunities for easy shifts in orientation, distance and localization. Children often gathered in one area, then ran or skipped to another, stood together and just talked. Many children assembled regularly for conversation at the see-saw or in the sand-box, which they found suitable for role-play with pails and shovels, wooden cars, and old pots and pans lying about haphazardly.

(4) Discretion over time.

The kindergarten teachers have five hours to dispose of, six days a week. They plan the distribution of time so that required topics will be covered, and skills will be practiced adequately. Children can, however, make use of opportunities to depart from the schedule. There are at least three types of discretional use of time: "lingering," "making haste" and "volunteering".

Lingering is seen in the deliberate prolongation of the passage from one activity to the next. On the way from assembly to crafts, pairs or trios of children postpone work. Chatting, they pick up the chairs from the circle, and move them back to the tables at a leisurely pace. Children deeply involved in painting, or in engineering at the block corner, ignored the teacher's calls to "clean up" until she herself approached and started to arrange the toys, to get them out

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of their "trance."

Making haste is another way of maximizing discretionary time. Teachers scheduled the precise beginnings of activities, but were lenient after that. They all practiced two pedagogical rules. (a) Each child had to do a piece of work in the corner s/he was assigned to. (b) Teachers must allow each individual to work at his/her own pace. A child assigned to cutting and pasting, whose heart was set on getting to the doll corner, could make something hurriedly according to the minimum standards for a completed piece. After getting the teacher's approval, s/he could file the piece in the appropriate drawer and use the time left before the next coordinated schedule change to take part in some preferred activity.

Under some circumstances, volunteering was highly effective for making the time one's own. Monitors who help the aide clear tables can often decide how long the tasks will take. When children were notified that free play was to come to an end, there was a flurry of helping the aide to put barrows and cars back into the store-room, to pile the pots in one corner, and so on. Volunteers for these tasks could continue chatting with their friends while "getting points" for being good helpers, and gaining permission to be absent from at least part of the final fully controlled assembly.

(5) Differentiated behavior during play

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During free play children's behavior was highly differentiated. Some gathered in transient group-formations for a very short time. Others consistently met with the same friends and chose to be involved in one kind of activity.

Even when children were doing what they had been assigned to, the activities were differentiated in terms of the behavior that the children demonstrated. There were lively conversations at the crafts tables - usually about TV, or "my father says". In one of the kindergartens we observed, the children assigned to the plasticine table regularly decided on a theme, improvised an appropriate shape, and used their creations in games of action: space ships, trucks, or cannons and guns.

In every kindergarten in which we conducted observations, we noted that there were children who were quiet, folded their hands during assembly, and made no special requests of the teacher or of other children, using good conduct to extricate themselves from involvement in the activity at hand.

In sum, there were numerous opportunities for children's experiences of the kindergarten to be differentiated from those of adults. The observations showed that in each kindergarten the children both in small-groups and in the group as a whole, were actually creating a social sub-world

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of their own. This children's culture intersected at some points with the world that the kindergarten teachers were planning and fostering, but was not identical with it.

The question that guided the third study, therefore, was whether the differentiated emergent reality was evident to the participants, and whether it could be tapped in the participants' accounts of the kindergarten. Analyses of the retrospective accounts follow.

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FINDINGS: ACCOUNTS

Six kindergarten teachers, and 47 pre-school children from 6 different kindergartens were asked to talk about the kindergarten day. The ages of the children ranged from five to six and a half, with a mode of five years and ten months. They had an average of 2.1 siblings (range: 0 - 7; mode: 1) ranging in age from half a year to 22. The average education of the parents was 13.3 years, and occupations included manual laborers, clerks, teachers, housewives, shopowners, engineers, drivers, nurses, technicians, and so on. Sixty-two per cent of the parents were born in Israel, 13% each in the Eastern bloc and in Arabic-speaking countries, 7% in Spanish-speaking countries and the rest in England, the United States, and Greece. The language spoken in almost all of the homes was Hebrew. Only in two homes was Russian also spoken and in one, English.

Figure 3 about here

The teachers all gave accounts that detailed activities from 8:00 a.m., or a little after, till 1.00 p.m. As Figure 3 shows, there are slots for three assemblies, each of which is planned so as to provide modeled behaviors and instruction to the entire class, as well as slots for parallel activities for smaller groups.

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The paradigmatic pattern of slots was uniform in all the kindergartens, for, as shown in the observations from the first 2 studies, this is considered the usual way of dividing a morning. According to the teachers, the typical kindergarten schedule fulfills the children's psychological needs and prepares them for the division of time into lessons at school.

The ways in which teachers defined the succeeding activities show what capacities and dispositions they impute to kindergarten children. According to teachers' accounts, children are capable of participating in conversations (collective assemblies). They can work, act, and be creative in various ways. Two kindergarten teachers take into consideration the fact that children will get hungry, and need to eat. The other four assume that children have to be organized to insure the proper intake of food. One of the teachers mentioned a slot for washing hands as part of the schedule.

Children are generally assumed to be competent in outdoor play. But they need instruction in order to acquire knowledge from work sheets with exercises in mathematical concepts, or reading preparedness. One teacher assumes that children need a great deal of individual attention and she therefore instructs them one at a time. Another talks of groups of

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children "being taken" for instruction.

Children's accounts are similar in some ways to those of their teachers and different in others. The children's accounts will be interpreted here in terms of (a) the extent to which the teacher's plan is transmitted to the children; (b) what children select for mention from among the familiar elements of the kindergarten; (c) what capacities children attribute to themselves; and (d) how they interpret the teacher's feelings.

The general question, "what do you do in the kindergarten all day?" usually evoked the response, "(We) play." Nine children (19%) answered with a kind of summary, i.e., a list of three activities or more without reference to order, and without repetition. One child said: "We play, have assembly, and eat;" another: "I have fun all the time; I run around with my friends."

In answer to the probes - "What do you first?...and then?" etc. - all of the children showed that they had a clear picture of the planned schedule. There were children who left out activities that the kindergarten teacher included. Not one of the interviewees, however, mixed up the sequence. In the question and answer situation, the children's responses were all grammatical (see Furth, 1980). Although there were seven children who responded with "I don't know" or "I don't

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remember" (Table 3), none of the answers was unrelated to the questions asked. Eleven children (23%) were "maximalists," who responded expansively to every one of the questions with a wealth of detail, and ten (21%) were "minimalists" whose answers were sparse, fragmentary utterances with a minimum of relevant information. (5)

Twenty-six of the children (55%) were middle-of-the-roaders who regulated the lengths of their answers according to the perceived intention of the questioner. There were short answers for the questions that probed order, and detailed answers to the questions that probed accounts of activities. The answers were all fluent, matter-of-fact, without excessive use of exclamatory expressions.

In order to see the ways in which children perceive kindergarten time, we will analyze the extent to which their accounts agree with those of the teachers, the kinds of classification they use, and discuss how these inter-relate with the children's understanding of succession.

Table 2 about here

The list of activities at the left of Table 2 includes elements that appear in all the accounts elicited from kindergarten teachers. However, a given slot was sometimes labeled differently. The assemblies, for example, were

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variously called circles, meetings, conversations, and gatherings. The indoor activity is named work, crafts, creative arts; or simply "tables". Instruction is named either in terms of the curriculum topic - numbers, letter-readiness - or in terms of the principle by which children recognize their group membership - "colors," or "birds and flowers." Outdoor activity was assigned the undifferentiated title of "Yard" by all the teachers. "Going home" is mentioned in the schedules of only two of the teachers, although every teacher indicates the end of the session by mentioning the termination of the "last" assembly.

From the activities mentioned by each child it is possible to see to what extent the accounts of the sample of children agree with those of the kindergarten teacher. Disagreement was tallied when children did not cite an activity or a slot that their teacher had mentioned. As shown in Table 2, agreement is highest with regard to work in the "Indoor activity", the "Yard," and "Assembly I," in that order. Relatively few children mentioned Assembly II, and only two mentioned the period of instruction in small groups.

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Table 3 about here

The teachers' accounts did not include all the categories that children noted. As Table 3 shows, 19% of the children mentioned alternative sub-activities of their own to fill slots. Some children (19%) described organizational details, referring to the series of actions that accompany the opening or closing of the kindergarten session. These included "coming by bus," "meeting everybody," and "taking coats and food bags" before going home. Cleaning up, which was not cited by any kindergarten teacher, figured in the accounts of three children. And while teachers spoke of "play and games" chiefly in connection with educational objectives, children mentioned play in a variety of contexts. Some children referred to "play" as what they "do" in the kindergarten. Others volunteered many details about playing before Assembly I; and cited the activity of "yard" between "work" and Assembly II, meaning that they run outside to play when they finish their assigned tasks at the tables. All together 73% of the children mentioned play as a principal heading and offered many details of how they play: role play in the sand box, running races in the yard, and laying roads and building houses with blocks indoors.

Children also emphasized "movement" as a separate aspect in the succession of kindergarten activities. Forty-nine per cent of the child interviewees (and none of the teachers)

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added changing locations to the activities they listed. They mentioned "going to the circle" in their lists of activities before "sitting in the circle." In one kindergarten, these emphases provided unforeseen evidence of the differences between the points of view of the teacher and her charges. Here, the children interviewed all noted that they come into the kindergarten from the yard, "in lines," while the teacher did not find it necessary to mention this rule of order.

Table 4 about here

Kindergarten teachers classified their accounts under general headings, sub-heads, and alternative slot-fillers. As Table 4 shows, 74% of the children provided accounts that were similarly characterized by classes and embedded sub-classes. Their classification of principal activities and sub-activities included the entire array of what actually happens in the kindergarten, including details of interest to the teacher and to themselves. They told us about the teacher's intentions - "we do exercises or she tells us a story," for example. But they also added comments such as ..."and then we ask each other funny riddles, and make noise, and Ofra (the teacher) tells us to leave the room..." the routine. Fifteen per cent of the children cited only disconnected details without attributing them to any general category. The remaining 11% listed all the important headings, as did the teacher, with no itemizing of sub-heads apart from a vague

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"and all kinds of things." Although the difference is not statistically significant, 3% more of the over-sixes classify as the teacher does (by class and sub-class), than do those under-six. The older boys in this sample were relatively more likely to list classes and sub-classes than the girls.

Table 5 about here

Qualities that children impute to themselves become clear from their descriptions of what makes the kindergarten teacher sad, angry, or happy, as shown in Table 5. Out of 129 responses to these questions, 55, or 43% of the answers attributed the teacher's feeling to specific acts of the children as a group. Children were said to hit other children, or interfere or make noise or break things. In addition, 16% of the answers attributed the teacher's feeling sad or angry to the fact that "children are disobedient", while the teacher's feeling happy stems from the fact that the children are "good." In only 21% of the responses did children answer in terms of the action of an individual child, or by giving an example mentioning a child's name.

In the 14 answers in which the kindergarten teacher is seen to be sad or angry or happy for reasons that have nothing to do with the children's behavior, the children made comments showing their empathy and capacity for observation. One child said, "She's always happy. I was looking at her when

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she was talking to you and she was happy." One or two children (9%) in each kindergarten did not know what makes the teacher feel good or bad.

CONCLUSIONS

From the observations carried out in Studies I and II, we concluded that the teacher recreates the kindergarten setting daily by imposing her institutionalized interpretations on objects, children and activities. The actions of the kindergarten children showed that they were defining themselves as a social category, an age group with self-propelled interests actively differentiated from those of the adults responsible for them.

The interviews carried out in Study I provide evidence that the teachers' meta-theme is "achieve as many goals as possible!" In their accounts (Study III) teachers relate how the program is designed to deal with the conflicts that may arise under this theme (see Wilensky, 1981). Teachers' accounts of the kindergarten reflect their educational intentions; while the children's accounts differ from those of the teachers because they integrate the group's active experience with the official schedule. By comparing children's accounts with those of teachers, we can see evidence of how the children crystallize their definition of

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an "age-group self" without seriously challenging the teacher's project.

Children's accounts confirm our observations of a conscious exercise of discretion over time in the kindergarten. They knowingly introduce play **before** Assembly I and **between** other scheduled activities. The use of space is important to the children as well. "Play" is located in the "corners" and "in the yard". By describing movement in space children ascribe meanings to activities that are controlled by the peer group, and not always visible to adult eyes.

Children did not say very much about the sounds of the kindergarten. Only one child out of the 47 put singing into his account -"....and then we finish singing and go home..." But the children's predilection for sounds that are commonly dismissed as 'white noise' can be deduced from their itemized narration of the many types of interaction they participate in. These are the sounds of the children's maximum personal involvement and these are the sounds which show disobedience and influence the teacher's feelings.

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Children's accounts described the performance that emerged when they were involved. The children in our sample knew the definitions of situations that teachers and aides structured for them. Relating events in an orderly manner and classifying them did not present a conceptual difficulty. The kindergarten children whose accounts we analyzed had a conception of the kindergarten as a social reality that was emerging in the routine performances of a session. They were capable of making their own motives explicit and they had a conception of how these motives influence role relations in the kindergarten. They distinguished between what teachers do and what children do, and they conceptualized mutual influences.

The children's accounts showed how they were managing successive coordinations with the kindergarten environment as a group and creating a social history. Expressing the life of a group and the developing mutualities of sociation, the children's accounts are signs of how cognition and behaviors interact in the negotiation of elements of setting. Their accounts show that children are not simply being absorbed into a culture when they are exposed to compulsory schooling in the kindergarten. Kindergarten children contribute to cultural reproduction by actively selecting and interpreting the socializing frameworks to which they are exposed.

We would summarize by saying that discrepancies between the

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accounts of children and adults are best explained as a latent consequence of how performances are structured in kindergartens.

NOTES

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1. Axia et al. (1984) call these "planned descriptions." An example is the courtyard account. "The courtyard has lots of trees in it; the teachers park their cars there. The custodian doesn't want us to go there because there are some flowers there and he's afraid we'll pick them...." (Translation by the authors).

2. It is therefore obliged to contribute to the transmission of "the values of Jewish culture, and the accomplishments of science, love for the homeland, and loyalty to the state and

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the people of Israel; practice in work, and training for pioneering; and an aspiration towards a society founded on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual assistance, and love for fellow men" (Ministry of Education, 1950, p.7).

3. We undertook a comparison of typical kindergartens in Germany and in Israel. Data from the German kindergartens, from Israeli state-religious kindergartens, and those where Arabic is the language of instruction, are not included for analysis here.

4. Topics of the interview were the following:

(1) Duties of the state toward the kindergarten? local authorities? religious community?

(2) Role of parents in the kindergarten?

(3) Demographic characteristics of the kindergarten class? (age, siblings, parents' occupations, education, country of birth)

(4) Basic equipment for the kindergarten?

(5) Most important aim(s) of the kindergarten? Have there been changes during the last (ca.) 20 years?

(6) Should the kindergarten education be compulsory? For what children is it especially (un)important?

(7) When can one see the results of a kindergarten education? Are there changes in the course of a year? What are the changes? The results?

(8) What activities do you emphasize most in the

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kindergarten? Children's reactions? behaviors? enthusiasm?

(9) How do you relate to music? How is it taught?

(10) What image do you have of an ideal kindergarten teacher? An ideal co-worker?

5. Compare the following two answers to the question: "What is the first thing (done in the kindergarten every day)?"

Maximalist: "In the morning one gets dressed at home; then one eats, and comes to the kindergarten. One takes off one's outer garments and then goes to play and to all kinds of work. Then one goes out into the yard for a bit. One comes back into the kindergarten; then one sees a telecast, and eats the 10 o'clock snack. Then one goes to the yard and then Rahel (the teacher) tells us to arrange things in the yard, and we arrange everything and go into the kindergarten...", and so on.

Minimalist: "(One) paints."

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FIGURE 1.
OBSERVATION SHEET: STUDY I

Name of kindergarten..... Teacher.....
Location..... Date.....

Time	Activity Perfrmce	Space	Movements Types	Kinds of sounds Children	Teacher
8:00					
8:05					
8:10	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
etc.					

(1) Label assigned by teacher and aide
(2) Quarters: I, II, III, IV; Tables 1, 2, 3, etc.
(3) Parts of body active and distinction of gross or fine
(4) Terms descriptive of communication: greetings, instructions, conversations, etc.

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FIGURE 2.
OBSERVATION SHEET: STUDY II

Name of kindergarten..... Teacher.....
Location..... Date.....

Time	Space	Actors	Activity	Intensity 1	2	3	4	5	
									Hand
									Body
									Hand
									Body
									Hand
									Body
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		(5)				etc.

(1) Noted when changes in activities or in stages of activities were announced
(2) Quarters: I, II, III, IV; Tables 1, 2, 3, etc.
(3) Boys, girls, teacher, aide, other adults
(4) Label assigned by teacher and aide
(5) Gradation of intensity of "locomotion" and "manipulation" noted by relation to position: 1=quiet motion in place; 2=movement in vicinity of original position; 3=relatively deliberate change of position; 4="jumpy" motion with change of position; 5=quick, smooth motion with change of position.

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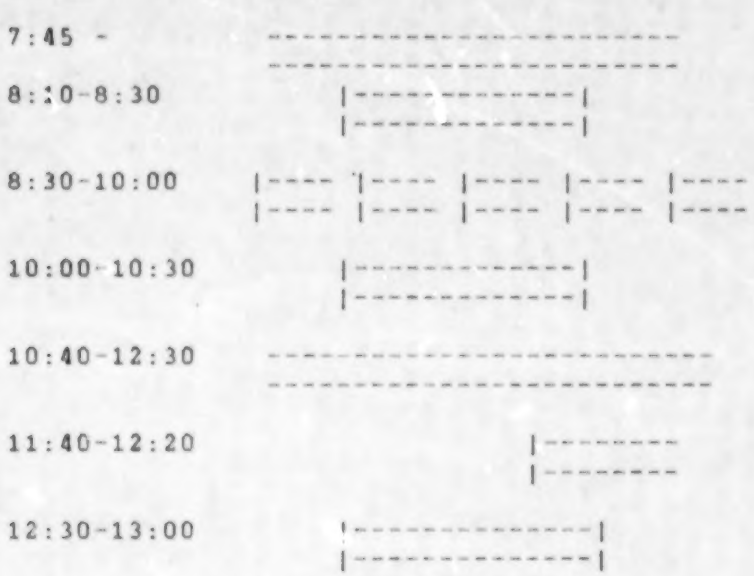
FIGURE 3.
PROGRAM OF KINDERGARTEN SESSIONS



= slot for teacher-defined collective activity

= slot for teacher-defined small-group activity

= slot for non-defined activity

= passage from one location to another (cited by children)

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Table 1.
Proportion of observations under conditions of full control (assemblies), partial control (tables for crafts), and freedom (yard) during which children's use of intense locomotion and intense manipulation are evident

Conditions of control	Intense locomotion	Intense manipulation
Full	0.04 (560)*	0.47 (645)
Partial	0.08 (710)	0.80 (900)
Free	0.31 (795)	0.86 (860)

* The numbers in brackets are the total number of observations in each condition.

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Table 2.
Proportion of agreement between children and kindergarten teachers on activities in the order cited, listed by kindergartens.

Activity	Kindergartens A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Assembly I	0.25	0.88	0.56	0.86	1.00	0.75	0.70
Indoor activity	0.75	0.88	0.89	1.00	0.57	1 00	0.89
Assembly II	0.25	0.13	0.67	0.43	0.43	0.38	0.38
10 o'clock snack	0.63	0.75	0.67	0.28	0.57	0.63	0.59
Yard	0.63	1.00	0.44	1.00	0.86	1.00	0.81
Instruction	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.04
Assembly III	0.38	0.63	0.67	0.86	0.29	0.75	0.59
Going home	0.50	0.25	0.78	0.00	0.14	0.25	0.34
N =	8	8	9	7	7	8	47

Table 3.
Proportion of children who supplied details not emphasized in teachers' accounts, listed by kindergarten

Details emphasized	Kindergartens A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Play	1.00	0.38	0.67	0.57	0.86	0.88	0.73
Change of location	0.63	1.00	0.56	0.28	0.14	0.25	0.49
Mentions of alternatives	0.38	0.50	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.19
Beginning/ending procedures	0.25	0.13	0.33	0.14	0.28	0.00	0.19
Clean up	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.130	0.06
Explicit "don't know"	0.25	0.13	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.17
N =	8	8	9	7	7	8	47

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Table 4.
Proportion of children whose accounts reveal different levels of classification by age and gender

Level of classification	Under Six (N=30) Boys	Under Six (N=30) Girls	Over Six (N=16) Boys	Over Six (N=16) Girls	TOTAL
Class, sub-classes	0.72	0.74	0.83	0.72	0.74
Classes, without sub-classes	0.09	0.16	0.17	0.00	0.11
Details without attribution to class	0.18	0.10	0.00	0.27	0.15
N =	11	19	6	11	47*

Levels of classification: $X = 4.6$, $p = 0.05$
Gender : $X = 0.21$, n.s.
Age : $X = 0.39$, n.s.

* Because of the small sample it is not appropriate to make a more elaborate analysis. It is possible, however, to point to the trend.

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Table 5.
Children's attributions of causes of teachers' bad and good feelings

Causes	Feelings			TOTAL
	Sadness	Anger	Happiness	
All the children-				
"(dis)obedience"/	0.48	0.24	0.29	1.01*(21)
specific acts of	0.25	0.42	0.33	1.00 (55)
Individual child-				
"(dis)obedience"/	0.20	0.40	0.40	1.00 (10)
specific acts of	0.18	0.24	0.58	1.00 (17)
Unrelated to children	0.28	0.21	0.51	1.00 (14)
"Don't know"	0.33	0.50	0.17	1.00 (12)
N** =	37	45	47	129

* because of rounding
** several answers were given by many children

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